

Appl. No. 10/657,543
Response dated February 21, 2006
Reply to Office Action of May 22, 2006

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1-19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method of retrofitting a security cover to a ground opening that is fitted with an existing annular shroud having a wall with an inner surface and a shoulder that extends inwardly from the wall inner surface, comprising the steps of:

a) providing second annular shroud and nesting the second annular shroud upon the existing annular shroud, the second annular shroud having a lid with a periphery, the lid being movably affixed to the second annular shroud with a hinge at a first interlocking structure, the lid having an upper surface, and a lower surface;

b) the lid having ~~a second~~ an interlocking structure spaced circumferentially about the periphery of the lid from the hinge first interlocking structure, the ~~second~~ interlocking structure including a lock having a locking member, the locking member positioned at the periphery of the lid, the locking member including a projecting portions that is rotatable between retracted and extended positions;

~~c) interlocking the first interlocking structure with a second interlocking structure mounted to the assembly of shrouds;~~

~~c) d)~~ using a key to interlock the ~~second~~ interlocking structure with the assembly of nested annular shrouds by locking the lock, wherein the lid can be opened ~~is removable from the shroud by using the key to unlock the lock and rotate release the projecting portion to the retracted position~~ ~~second interlocking structure from the assembly of annular shrouds.~~

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein ~~the~~ both interlocking structures ~~have~~ has a projecting portions that extends below the shoulder of the existing annular shroud when the apparatus is locked using the key.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein in step "c" the key rotates a lock of the second interlocking structure.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein in step "a" the hinge and interlocking structures are spaced circumferentially apart ~~at least 90 degrees~~.

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24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein in step "a" the hinge and interlocking structures are spaced circumferentially about one hundred eighty degrees apart.

25. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein in step "c" the key is insertable into the second interlocking structure at an upper surface of the lid.

26-45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently Amended) A method of retrofitting a security cover to a ground opening having an existing annular ring member that has an annular wall with an inner surface and an annular shoulder that extends inwardly from the annular wall inner surface, comprising the steps of:

a) providing a second annular ring member with a lid and a pivot that pivotally attaches the lid to the second annular ring member, the lid having a periphery, an upper surface, a lower surface and an interlocking structure spaced circumferentially from the pivot, the interlocking structure including a lock having a rotary locking member that rotates between locking and unlocking positions, the rotary locking member being positioned at the lid periphery and extending to the upper surface, wherein the interlocking structure has at least one projecting portion;

b) connecting the second annular ring member to the first annular ring member to form an assembly;

c) interlocking the first interlocking structure with the assembly of annular ring members;

d) using a key to interlock the interlocking structure with the assembly of annular ring members, wherein the lid can be rotated upon the pivot to an open position with respect to the assembly of ring members by using the key to rotate the locking member and release the interlocking structure from the assembly of annular ring members.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46 wherein the interlocking structure has a projecting portion that extends below the an annular shoulder of an annular ring member when the apparatus is locked using the key.

48. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 wherein in step "c d" the key

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rotates a lock of the interlocking structure.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 wherein in step "a" the pivot and interlocking structures are spaced circumferentially apart ~~at least 90 degrees~~.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46 wherein in step "a" the pivot and interlocking structure are spaced circumferentially about one hundred eighty degrees apart.

51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 46 wherein in step "c d" the key is insertable into the interlocking structure at an upper surface of the lid.

52. (New) A method of retrofitting a security cover to a ground opening that has an existing annular member with an annular wall having an inner surface and an annular shoulder that extends inwardly from the annular wall inner surface, comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a ring member having a central opening and a lid that can be opened or closed, the lid pivotally attached to the ring member with a hinge, the lid having an upper surface, a lower surface, and a periphery that closely conforms to the annular wall of the existing annular member when the lid is closed;
- b) providing the lid with a keyed lock structure that is spaced circumferentially from the hinge, the lock structure having a rotary locking member that rotates between locking and unlocking positions, the rotary locking member being positioned at the lid periphery and extending to the lid upper surface for enabling a user to access the locking member with a key via the lid upper surface;
- c) providing the lock structure with a projecting portion that rotates between a retracted position under the lid and a projected position that extends beyond the lid periphery;
- d) connecting the ring member to the annular member;
- e) using a key to interlock the lock structure with the assembly of annular and ring members; and
- f) using the key to rotate the locking member and release the projecting portion of lock structure from the connected annular and ring members so that the lid can be opened.